

social
studies

Recycling Rangers



Objective

To help children recognize the similarities and differences among common recyclable items.



Activity Description

Students play a sorting game and put different recyclables into the appropriate bin.



Materials Needed

- Four recycling bins
- Recyclable materials listed in the box below



Key Vocabulary Words

Paper
Plastic
Glass
Metals



Duration

1 hour



Skills Used

Communication
Observation/classification



Activity

Step 1: Set up the four bins in the classroom and label them “Paper,” “Glass,” “Plastic,” and “Metals.” Make a pile of all of the recyclable items on the floor and ask the students to gather around them in a circle.

Step 2: Explain to students that by the end of the lesson they will become “Recycling Rangers” and learn how to recycle different items. Discuss with the students how different “garbage” items can be recycled into new products. Note that it is important to separate these items into different categories before they are used to make new products. Refer to the Teacher Fact Sheet titled *Recycling* on pg. 73 for background information on the recycling process.

Step 3: Ask the students to look at the different recyclable materials and discuss how they are alike and how they are different. Ask them

Recyclable Materials

- Cardboard
- Newspapers
- Magazines
- Plastic soda bottles
- Plastic milk containers
- Glass jars or bottles
- Aluminum cans
- Steel food cans
- Other materials recycled in your community

Note: All materials should be cleaned and all sharp lids or edges should be removed or taped over to avoid injury.

to compare the colors, textures, and weight of the different objects. When handling the glass bottles, take great care not to accidentally break the containers. Also, note that some metal containers have sharp edges that can cause injury to the children.

Step 4: Moving through the pile one item at a time, ask the students to identify the material that each item is made from. Then, choose a student volunteer to place the item in the appropriate bin. For the older children, ask the student volunteer to also name another product that is made from that same material. If a student, for example, is holding a glass jelly jar, he or she could note that soda bottles are also made of glass.

Step 5: After the lesson is concluded, encourage students to go home that night and share what they learned with their parents.



Assessment

1. Ask students to name some examples of recyclable items.
2. Have students explain why it is important to sort the different recyclable items.
3. Ask students what kinds of materials recyclable items are made from.



Enrichment

1. Select a few objects from the lesson, ensuring a good mix of shapes and sizes. Ask the children to trace outlines of the objects and then color them in. Put the pictures up on the classroom wall to create a recycling art gallery.
2. Organize the class into teams of four children and give each group a different recyclable item. Ask the students to make a new object from the recycled items such as a crayon holder or paper plane.